

OUR JOURNEY

Unfortunately, Dunstan Baby Language wasn't around when our first daughter was born in early 2006, but I filed the information away in my memory for when my second daughter was born in mid 2008.

By looking online, we found enough information to get a basic idea of the sounds, then started listening to our newborn daughter's cries. It was amazing to see that the reflexes were there – when she was tired, her mouth really did become oval shaped!

By using the Dunstan system, we were able to respond in a more timely, less “hit and miss” fashion to her cries. This made for a more content baby and more content parents. We couldn't always pick up the sounds in the cries, but by looking at our daughter's mouth shape and tongue position, we could tell the reflex and therefore the intent of the cry.

We also used Dunstan Baby Language in association with Elimination Communication (responding to a baby's natural toileting cues as they do in other cultures. See <http://www.tribalbaby.org> for more details). Because we were able to respond to both our daughter's cries and toileting body language, she was a very settled baby, and even developed her own cue for needing the toilet – blowing raspberries starting at 12 weeks of age! She knew that if she tried to communicate, we would do our best to figure out what she was “saying” and respond to her. What a great lesson to teach your children – that what they have to say is important and you are listening!

Good luck with your parenting journey. I hope that the Dunstan Baby Language helps your family as much as it has helped ours.

RESOURCES

DVD:

- Dunstan Baby Language DVD (2 Disc DVD set, booklet and wall chart)
Available from:
<http://www.dunstanbaby.com/>

Websites:

- Dunstan Baby Language Official Website:
<http://www.dunstanbaby.com/>

Videos:

- Overview of the Dunstan Baby Language System:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5DUxSLrgPQQ>
- Sample of 1st DVD from the system
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Ehv5m9gnu0>

Dunstan Baby Language



Why is my baby crying?
**5 sound reflexes every
baby makes**

DO BABIES HAVE A LANGUAGE?

Priscilla Dunstan, an Australian woman with a photographic memory for sound, discovered that babies make 5 sounds in their cries which mean 5 distinct things. These sounds cross cultures and linguistic groups as they are based not on language, but on reflexive mouth shapes.

SOUND REFLEXES

Between birth and 3 months, infants make what Dunstan calls sound reflexes. We all have reflexes, like sneezes, hiccups, and burps, that each have a recognizable pattern when sound is added to the reflex. There are other reflexes that all babies experience, and when sound is added to these, a distinct, preemptive "cry" will occur before the infant breaks into an hysterical cry. Dunstan claims that these preemptive cries can indicate what the infant requires (e.g., food, comfort, sleep, etc.), and they escalate to the hysterical cry if they are not answered. As the infant matures past 3 months in vocalization, the sound reflexes become replaced with more elaborate babbling.

BEFORE YOU START

Keep in mind that it's easiest to recognize the words if you listen during what Dunstan calls the "pre-cry" stage, before your baby is hysterical. When you hear more than one word, act on the word you hear most. If you're having trouble, shift your baby's position (sit her up on your lap, for example) and try to listen for the distinctive part of each word (such as the 'n' in "neh"). Still not sure what he's saying? Just care for your baby as you normally would and try again next time.

THE 5 BABY "WORDS"

According to Dunstan, the five universal words (or *sound reflexes*) used by infants are:

Neh I'm hungry - Used to communicate its hunger. The sound is produced when the sucking reflex is triggered, and the tongue is pushed up on the roof of the mouth. "Neh," is an infant's sucking reflex with sound added to it.

Owh I'm sleepy - Used to communicate that they are tired. The sound is produced much like an audible yawn. You can spot the word because your baby's mouth forms an oval shape as he says it.

Heh I'm experiencing discomfort - Used to communicate stress, discomfort, or perhaps that it needs a fresh nappy. The sound is produced by a response to a skin reflex (the same one that governs sweating), signalling irritation, such as a wet nappy or an itchy bodysuit.

Eairh I have lower gas - Used to communicate that they have flatulence or an upset stomach. The sound is produced when trapped air from a belch that is unable to release and travels to the stomach where the muscles of the intestine and stomach tighten to force the air bubble out. Often, this sound will indicate that a bowel movement is in progress, and the infant will bend its knees, bringing the legs toward the torso. This leg movement assists in the ongoing process.

Eh I need to burp / I have gas - Used to communicate that it needs to be burped. The sound is produced when a large bubble of trapped air is caught in the chest. What you hear is your baby trying to get the burp out their mouth.

EXAMPLES OF THE CRIES

To see video of babies making the cries, watch:

- Priscilla Dunstan on Oprah:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gPXsoZ_F0SA
- "Neh" (Sample of Dunstan DVD)
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w6CFSGAueyo>
- Close Up (Current affairs show from NZ):
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JEFefKdSGWM&NR=1>
- The Morning Show (Aust)
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_IRQc2hOiKE
- CTV News (USA)
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aewskiO9YuY>
- Fox 13 News (USA)
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LGdPWNH0Yr0>

(alternatively search www.youtube.com for "Dunstan Baby Language")